Course: CISC 101 Computers and Information Systems
Semester: Spring 1998
Professor: Paul D. Amer
Document: Course Syllabus

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## 1 Description

Computer literacy and the ability to use computer software is now an essential part of everyday life, especially with the exponential growth of the *information superhighway*, i.e., the Internet. This course provides an introduction to the basic concepts and terminology of computers and information processing, along with hands-on experience using computer software.

- Computer Organization: hardware components of a typical computer system and their interaction in processing data; number systems (bases 2,8,16); representation of information in memory; computer memory and storage devices; storage and retrieval of information;
- Networks and Telecommunication: media for data communication, computer networks, file transfer, electronic communication, the World Wide Web.
- Software: command-line versus graphical user interfaces (GUI), word processing, spreadsheets, databases, electronic mail, bulletin boards, multimedia and hypermedia.
- Computer Programming: algorithms, introduction to the BASIC programming language.
- Computers, Ethics, and Society: data security, privacy, computer viruses, ethical use of computer systems.

**Prerequisites:** Students are assumed to have little or no previous experience with computers. This course is encouraged for Freshmen. This course is **NOT** open to CISC, CPEG, or EE majors nor to any student who already has credit for: ANY other CISC course (e.g., CISC105, CISC167, CISC181), ACCT260, EGTE11, EGTE112, FREC135, HPER276 or an equivalent course.

## 2 Class Meetings

Each week consists of two 1-hour lectures and one 2-hour laboratory. You are expected to attend all scheduled course lectures. Lab attendance is mandatory; failure to attend will result in a grade penalty. (See policy on Grading.) In my past classes, there has always been a high positive correlation between class attendance and final grade.

## 3 Textbooks and Equipment

*Introduction to Computers, 2nd ed*, 1997, by Peter Norton (ISBN 0-02-804325-1)
*(Customized) Microsoft Office 97 Professional Lab Manual* by O'Leary and O'Leary (ISBN 0-07-561041-8)
6 computer diskettes: These should be 3.5 inch HD (high density) diskettes, either PC-preformatted (preferable) or unformatted. They can be purchased at the bookstore. You **must** have your diskettes for the first lab.

## 4 Grading

| | |
|---|---|
| Mid Term (tentatively Mar 30) | 100 points |
| Final Exam (finals week) | 150 points |
| Homework and Labs | 250 points |
| | 500 points |

| Total Points | Course Grade |
|---|---|
| 450 | A |
| 435 | A- |
| 420 | B+ |
| 400 | B |
| 385 | B- |
| 370 | C+ |
| 350 | C |
| 335 | C- |
| 320 | D+ |
| 300 | D |
| 285 | D- |
| below 285 | F |

If the midterm is missed because of an excused absence, it cannot be taken later. It will not be included in the computation of the final grade; the final exam will be weighted extra. If the midterm is missed because of an unexcused absence, it cannot be taken later and the lowest grade attained in the class minus 10% will be included in the computation of the final grade.

Occasionally, mistakes occur in grading. After a graded item is returned, you have two weeks to submit a request to have it regraded. After two weeks, requests for grade changes will not be considered. Regrading requests should include the original item (i.e., exam, homework, lab) and the reason that regrading is requested.

Special considerations may have a positive effect on final grades. These include class participation, a pattern of grade improvement, an isolated bad grade, etc. Such considerations will never have a negative effect on the final grade.

A philosophical note on grades. I do the best I can in measuring how much course material you demonstrate that you know. This is done through assignments and tests. I do not grade intelligence, creativity, nor in particular how much time and effort you put into the course.

## 5 Bonus Quizzes

There may be occasional surprise quizzes during lectures. In such cases, the quizzes are treated as bonus points that will be added to your final grade in the course. Missed quizzes cannot be made up.

# 6 Labs

Labs involve working with computer software such as the Windows graphical user interface, Microsoft Word (for word processing), Microsoft Excel (for spreadsheets), Microsoft Access (for databases), Netscape for traversing the World Wide Web, and BASIC for designing very simple computer programs. In many cases, you will begin each week's assignment in one lab class and need to complete it outside of class before the next lab class. You may use a free machine in McDowell or any other machine with compatible software. The McDowell computing site allows telephone reserving of a PC for 2 hour periods. In addition, there is always a site consultant who can help with questions and problems.

Please arrive at lab a few minutes early. The McDowell site **requires** that all diskettes be checked for viruses each time you enter lab; this security precaution protects you from serious problems in your work.

# 7 Turning In Homework and Lab Assignments

Lab assignments and homework give students an opportunity to review and work with some of the concepts discussed in class.

- All assignments are due at the **start** of lab or class on the announced due date. If an assignment is submitted late, **the time of submission must be written on the front**.
- The pages for an assignment must be stapled together, and your name and section number must be printed in ink on the first page. Failure to do so will result in 2 points being deducted from your grade for that assignment.
- Late assignments must be placed in my mailbox in the Computer Science Department Office in 103 Smith Hall. **DO NOT** give late assignments directly to your TA — there will be a 5 point penalty for doing so.

Unexcused late assignments are penalized as follows:

| Turned In | Penalty |
|---|---|
| before noon two days after the due date | 10 % |
| before noon three days after the due date | 25 % |
| before noon four days after the due date | 50 % |
| before noon five days after the due date | 75 % |
| more than five days late | not accepted |

Saturday and Sunday are not counted as late days. Thus an assignment due at the start of Friday's lab and turned in the following Tuesday by noon will be penalized 10%. An assignment due in Friday's lab and turned in the following Wednesday by noon will be penalized 25%. Please note that late penalties are based on when the assignment is physically submitted to the Professor in person or placed in his mailbox, not when it is run on the computer.

**Lab attendance is required.** You may miss up to two lab classes with or without an excuse. After that, **5 points** will be deducted from your final course grade for each lab that is missed. (Note: although you may miss two lab classes, you must still submit solutions to the lab assignments on schedule.)

In general, new lab assignments will be distributed during Monday's lecture. If you know in advance that you must miss a lab and want to avoid having it count as one of the two permitted absences, you may complete the **entire assignment** and submit it **prior** to the lab class in which the other students will be working on it (i.e., the lab class you need to miss). Please **clearly** note on the assignment that you are submitting an assignment early in lieu of attending lab. Be sure to list the date of the lab you are missing and the date that the assignment is being turned in.

For example, suppose you need to miss your lab class on Wed Feb 18. The lab assignment is distributed on Mon Feb 16 with a normal due date of Wed Feb 25. To avoid the penalty for missing the lab class, you must turn in the completed lab assignment before your lab on Feb 18. In most cases, lab assignments will be available earlier than the Monday before general distribution to the class.

## 8 Academic Dishonesty

This is likely to be the first time you are using a computer as the major component of a course. Hence, you will be learning what is allowed behavior and what is not allowed behavior. This course is meant to help you develop proper computer *etiquette* - what is polite and what is impolite; and proper computer *ethics* - what is right and what is wrong.

When your lab does not work, the first thing to do is use the textbook and notes to solve the problem yourself. The second and third things to do are to try to solve the problem yourself! Computers are frustrating; just remember they are fast, but dumb. At that point, you may ask for the assistance of a consultant, TA, Professor, classmate or friend to help you understand the specific problem. With classmates or friends, you may discuss in GENERAL terms the GENERAL approach to solving a lab. Specifically, you may NOT:

- Copy, or allow another student to copy, a computer file that contains another student's assignment, and submit it, in part or in its entirety, as your own.
- Work together on an assignment, sharing the computer files and programs involved, and then make duplicate diskette copies of the assignment to submit as one's own individual work.
- Use programs or data from previous semesters.

Please understand clearly from the start. There will be no second chances. If you are caught performing any form of academic misconduct, you will be appropriately charged and, if found guilty, sanctioned according to the official University Academic Guidelines. If you are in doubt whether or not a behavior is permitted, then ask the TA or Professor beforehand.

If you are having difficulty with the course, then see the Professor or TAs for extra help. If you think submitting someone else's lab as your own is a viable alternative to studying and working harder, please do not. You will not think so if you are caught.

## 9 Important Note

Some past students mistakenly assumed that CISC101 would be a *cake-course* requiring little or no work. Unfortunately they discovered too late that this was **NOT** the case. While CISC101 is an introductory course and does not presume any prior computer experience, it does require a good deal of time, particularly to complete the lab assignments which often must be finished outside of class. This is true even for students with past experience in using computers.

This is not meant to discourage anyone from taking this course. Just realize from the beginning that it requires considerable effort on your part. The Professor and TAs will work hard to provide you with the knowledge and expertise necessary to utilize current computer technology and adapt to the rapid changes that are currently taking place. At the end of the semester, we hope you will feel you have gained a great deal from taking this course and are better prepared for attaining your career goals.

## Class Schedule

(In 20+ years of university teaching, I have never been able to accurately state a full semester's schedule before the first day. This is APPROXIMATE!)

| Date | Topic | Reading (Norton Text) |
|---|---|---|
| Wed Feb 11 | Course Introduction | Ch 1 |
| Lab 1 | Introduction to Windows GUI | Handout |
| | | |
| Mon Feb 16 | Basic Computer Organization | Ch 1; Lab Manual: WN1-11 |
| Wed Feb 18 | Operating Systems and User Interfaces | Ch 6 |
| Lab 2 | Email and User Interfaces | Handout |
| | | |
| Mon Feb 23 | Word Processing | Ch 7 |
| Wed Feb 25 | Data and Number Systems | Ch 2 |
| Lab 3 | Word Processing (Part I) - Microsoft Office 97 Word | Lab Manual |
| | | |
| Mon Mar 2 | Data and Number Systems (con't) | Ch 2 |
| Wed Mar 4 | Processing Data - Intel vs Motorola | Ch 2 |
| Lab 4 | Word Processing (Part II) - Microsoft Office 97 Word | Lab Manual |
| | | |
| Mon Mar 9 | Interacting with the Computer: I/O Devices | Ch 3 |
| Wed Mar 11 | Applications Software: Spreadsheets | Ch 8 |
| Lab 6 (no 5) | Spreadsheets (Part I) - Microsoft Office 97 Excel | Lab Manual |
| | | |
| Mon Mar 16 | Interacting with the Computer: I/O Devices (con't) | Ch 3 |
| Wed Mar 18 | Interacting with the Computer: I/O Devices (con't) | Ch 3 |
| Lab 7 | Spreadsheets (Part II) - Microsoft Office 97 Excel | Lab Manual |
| | | |
| Mon Mar 23 | External Storage - Disks, Tapes, etc. | Ch 4 |
| Wed Mar 25 | External Storage - Disks, Tapes, etc. (con't) | Ch 4 |
| Lab 8 | Spreadsheets (Part III) - Microsoft Office 97 Excel | Lab Manual |
| | | |
| Mon Mar 30 | Midterm Exam (tentative date) | |
| Wed Apr 1 | Review Midterm | |
| Lab | (catch up) | |
| | | |
| Mon Apr 6 | Spring Break | |
| Wed Apr 8 | Spring Break | |
| | | |
| Mon Apr 13 | The Internet and the WWW | Ch 10 |
| Wed Apr 15 | Networks and Data Communications | Ch 5 |
| Lab 9 | Netscape and the WWW | Handout |

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|---|---|---|
| Mon Apr 20 | Networks and Data Communications (con't) | Ch 5 |
| Wed Apr 22 | Networks and Data Communications (con't) | Ch 5 |
| Lab 10 | Newsgroups, File transfer | Handout |
| | | |
| Mon Apr 27 | Applications Software: Databases | Ch 9 |
| Wed Apr 29 | Applications Software: Databases (con't) | Ch 9 |
| Lab 11 | Database (Part I) - Microsoft Office 97 Access | Lab Manual |
| | | |
| Mon May 4 | Creating Computer Programs (con't) | Ch 16 |
| Wed May 6 | Creating Computer Programs | Ch 16 |
| Lab 12 | Database (Part II) - Microsoft Office 97 Access | Lab Manual |
| | | |
| Mon May 11 | Creating Computer Programs (con't) | Ch 16 |
| Wed May 13 | Computer Ethics and Privacy | Ch 13 |
| Lab 13 | Designing a Computer Program | Handout |
| | | |
| Mon May 18 | History of Computers (movie) | |
| Wed May 20 | Review | |
| Lab 14 | Writing a Computer Program | Handout |
| | | |
| Wed May 22-29 | Final Exam | |